

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

UNCLAS ABIDJAN 5127

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, EAGR, ICCA

SUBJECT: ALLIANCE OF COCOA PRODUCING COUNTRIES: MEETING OF
THE AD HOC COMMITTEE

REF: STATE 117952

1. ON MONDAY, MAY 29, IVORIAN MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE DENIS BRAKANON OPENED A WEEK LONG MEETING OF THE ALLIANCE OF COCOA PRODUCING COUNTRIES IN YAMOSSOUKRO, IVORY COAST. MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE; IVORY COAST, GHANA, BRAZIL, NIGERIA, CAMEROON, GABON, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, ECUADOR AND SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE; HAVE ALL SENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE SESSION AT WHICH THE MAJOR TOPIC OF DISCUSSION IS TO BE THE RENEGOTIATION OF THE 1975 INTERNATIONAL COCOA AGREEMENT.

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2. IN HIS OPENING ADDRESS, MINISTER BRAKANON POINTED OUT THAT MARKETS FOR PRIMARY COMMODITIES, ESPECIALLY COCOA, ARE ESSENTIALLY UNSTABLE AND HIGHLY SPECULATIVE. UNCERTAINTY AND WIDE FLUCTUATIONS IN EXPORT EARNINGS, HE STATED, ARE DIFFICULT FOR FRAGILE DEVELOPING ECONOMIES TO WEATHER. FOR THIS REASON IT IS NECESSARY TO RENEGOTIATE THE 1975 AGREEMENT SO THAT IT IS RESPONSIVE TO THE REALISTIC NEEDS OF BOTH PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS.

3. THE TWO MAJOR POINTS OF CONTENTION FOR THE IVORIANS IN THE 1975 AGREEMENT ARE THE PRICE RANGE PROVISIONS AND THE INTERVENTION PROCEDURE FOR STOCK STABILIZATION. THE PRICE RANGE PROVISIONS AND THE INTERVENTION PROCEDURE FOR STOCK STABILIZATION. THE PRICE RANGE, IN THE OPINION OF THE IVORIANS AND MOST OTHER ALLIANCE MEMBERS, IS UNREALISTICALLY LOW. THE IVORIANS PROPOSE TO REVISE THE RANGE UPWARD TO 65 AND 81 CENTS PER POUND WHICH THEY CONSIDER TO BE A FAIRER REFLECTION OF CURRENT MARKET TRENDS. ON THE INTERVENTION PROCEDURE, THE IVORIANS ARE LESS SPECIFIC. THEY BELIEVE THAT THE CURRENT QUOTA ARRANGEMENTS ARE LESS THAN OPTIMAL AND ARE TALKING ABOUT "A MORE FLEXIBLE" MECHANISM FOR INTERVENTION AND STABILIZATION, ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE NOT TABLED THE U.S. BUFFER STOCK PROPOSAL FORMALLY AT THE ALLIANCE MEETING.

4. IN HIS SPEECH, BRAKANON APPEALED TO ALLIANCE MEMBERS FOR UNITY, ASKING THEM TO PUT ASIDE THEIR MINOR DIFFERENCES AND AGREE UPON A SINGLE PACKAGE BACKED BY ALL PRODUCERS WHICH COULD BE PRESENTED AT THE UPCOMING RENEGOTIATING SESSIONS. IN ADDITION, HE APPEALED TO CONSUMER COUNTRIES FOR THEIR COOPERATION IN ASSURING A REASONABLE PRICE FOR PRODUCERS AND FOR ASSISTANCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROCESSING FACILITIES IN PRODUCING COUNTRIES AS A PART OF THEIR TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT AID PROGRAMS.

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